

What are the parallels between circumcision and baptism?

The parallels between circumcision and baptism are significant in Christian theology, particularly as discussed in the New Testament. Here are the key connections:

Sign of Covenant Membership

Circumcision was the physical sign of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants, marking inclusion in the people of Israel (Genesis 17:9-14). **Baptism** is understood by many Christians as the sign of the new covenant in Christ, marking entrance into the Christian community.

Applied to Infants/Children

In Jewish tradition, circumcision was performed on eight-day-old male infants. Many Christian traditions practice infant baptism partly based on this parallel, seeing baptism as the New Testament equivalent that now applies to both males and females.

Theological Foundation

The Apostle Paul explicitly connects these practices in Colossians 2:11-12, describing baptism as a "circumcision made without hands" and linking both to being buried and raised with Christ. This suggests baptism fulfills what circumcision symbolized.

Transition from Old to New Covenant

Early Christians debated whether Gentile converts needed circumcision (Acts 15). The conclusion that circumcision wasn't necessary for Gentiles, while baptism was required, helped establish baptism as the new covenant sign replacing circumcision's role.

Incorporation into God's People

Both rituals signify incorporation into a faith community—circumcision into Israel, baptism into the Church (the "body of Christ").

Different Christian traditions interpret these parallels differently, particularly regarding whether this justifies infant baptism (paedobaptist view) or supports believer's baptism only (Baptist view).

What are the parallels between Passover and The Lord's Supper?

The connections between Passover and the Last Supper— are profound and central to Christian theology. Here are the key parallels:

Timing and Context

The Last Supper was a Passover meal (or occurred during Passover season). Jesus gathered with his disciples to celebrate this Jewish feast commemorating Israel's liberation from Egypt. At this supper, he institutes the sacrament known as the Eucharist or The Lord's Supper.

The Lamb

In Passover, an unblemished lamb was sacrificed and its blood marked the doorposts so the angel of death would "pass over" Hebrew homes. Christians see Jesus as the ultimate Passover Lamb—John the Baptist called him "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." His sacrifice provides deliverance from sin and death, just as the original lamb's blood provided deliverance from judgment.

Blood and Covenant

Passover commemorated God's covenant with Israel, sealed with the blood of lambs. At the Last Supper, Jesus spoke of "the new covenant in my blood," establishing a new relationship between God and humanity through his sacrifice.

The Bread

Passover includes unleavened bread (matzah) representing the haste of the Exodus. Jesus took this bread, broke it, and said "This is my body given for you," connecting the bread to his physical sacrifice.

The Cup

The Passover meal includes multiple cups of wine with symbolic meanings. Jesus took one cup and identified it with his blood "poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Liberation Theme

Both meals celebrate freedom—Passover from physical slavery in Egypt, the Lord's Supper from spiritual slavery to sin.

Memorial Command

Both include instructions to remember: "Do this in remembrance of me" (Last Supper) parallels Passover's "This day shall be a memorial for you" (Exodus 12:14).